

BLACK & PINK

February 2010 Newsletter

Dear friends,

This is the rebirth of the Black and *Pink* newsletter. It has been quite some time since this has actually gone out as a resource to incarcerated people. My apologies for its starting and falling. The intention is for this to be a monthly publication that is written by queer and trans people in prison and formerly incarcerated people. The hope is for gay, lesbian, bisexual, same-gender loving, queer, transgender, and gender non-conforming people who are locked up to have a place to get out their stories and feel connected to a broader community of people. This is an avenue for sharing knowledge, survival strategies, poetry, art, political ideas, and more.

Black and *Pink* operates from an abolitionist perspective. We believe that we have the capacity to live in a world that is free of policing, surveillance, prisons, jails, ICE, judges, and all other aspects of the penal system. We are striving for a world that addresses harm and violence in an authentic way, rooted in the experiences of survivors. We understand the U.S. penal system to be rooted in systems of white supremacy, capitalism, patriarchy, homophobia, transphobia, and other forms of oppression. Because of this understanding this newsletter intentionally prioritizes the voices and issues of those most impacted by the prison industrial complex. No racist things will be printed. No sexist things will be printed. No transphobic things will be printed. We want to support you telling your story and connecting with other people, and we will do so in a way that honors everyone's identity.

Black and *Pink* primarily is an internet based pen-pal program that lists the names of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer people who are incarcerated and a 25 word (non-sexual) description. We try to publicize the list and encourage "free-world" people to write to prisoners and get involved in the movement to abolish the prison industrial complex. Black and *Pink* is an undefined group of volunteers with connections across the country. striving to support people in prison as best as possible. If you would like to be listed on the free pen-pal site please send your information to the Black and *Pink* address.

As prisoners are not allowed to write to one another, in most places, we will not send the pen-pal list out to prisoners. We will, however, print things you want to write and share in this newsletter. If you have ideas of how this newsletter can best be used please write about that as well. The purpose of this newsletter is to serve people who are doing time. Let us know how this can be a more useful resource for you.

Black and *Pink* has an address at a church because the "founder" is a Unitarian Universalist clergy person. If you are looking for spiritual or religious support we can try to provide that in some way as well. Prisons often bring in preachers and pastors who preach hate. We wish to provide a space for religious perspectives- Christian, Humanist, Muslim, Buddhist, Pagan, Jewish, Hindu, etc.- that affirm and support queer and transgender identity. The divine is infinitely loving and that includes, especially, those who are marginalized in our culture today.

Please know that you are cared for and not forgotten. It has been said, "Once there were no prisons, that day will come again!" Enjoy the newsletter!

Black and *Pink*
c/o Community Church of Boston
565 Boylston St.
Boston, MA 02116

Love,
Jason Lydon



Paula W.'s Story

Please note: All identifying information was removed for the individual's safety.

In 2005, on N____ unit, I was sold from one gang to another gang, as a sex slave and to protect me from the other gangs that were trying to "turn me out!" In 2006 I discharged my sentence and was released on probation for a second charge. My probation was revoked in 2007 and I returned to TDCJ custody in 2008. During processing in the W____ County Jail, a male Lt. pat searched me, in my dress, and squeezed my breasts so hard it made my knees buckle! This was caught on camera, but I didn't know it at the time! He asked what my gender was when he realized what he had done and I told him FEMALE! Shocked, he said his paperwork says I'm a male. I told him, "My gender is female, my sex is male and my orientation is a MTF TRANSEXUAL WOMAN." He said, "I don't know how to handle this," and a female Sgt. said, "I'll take care of this one." She showed them how to pat search a woman and took me to the infirmary to be housed in special housing. Capt. P____ got it authorized for me to be allowed to continue my Hormone Replacement Therapy, be issued bras and panties, keep my long hair and be treated as a woman. I was taken to TDCJ's B____ unit in a squad car, by myself. I came into TDCJ intake, was forced to strip in front of about 100 men, who whistled and made fun of me, my breasts, my bra, my panties, long hair, nail polish, and cute butt! This infuriated the guards and everything went down hill from there. From the CO's to the Captain on shift, I was stripped of my identity, ridiculed, called names, and told I must become a man now! My head was shaved, nails cut short, put on exhibition and for 3 days the ranking officers tried to find a way to get my finger and toe polish off. A female Lt. finally brought in some polish remover and forced me to take it off. The head nurse took ALL my medications and destroyed them all, all except my depression medication! My body and mind went on a roller coaster ride as I went through hormone changes COLD TURKEY! NOT a very good experience at all. One of the male guards liked to sit four feet away, watch me shave my body and shower when he was on duty. He'd ask me what I would do for HIM, if I asked him for anything. Another guard that escorted me to the doctor's office said, "I bet you enjoyed that" after my prostate exam. I next was put on a bus handcuffed to this HUGE man and sent to a hold over unit called R____ unit on my way to A____ Unit. On the way to R____ unit at 3:00 in the morning, in the dark, in the middle of 80 men blocking the view of the guards, I was forced to have oral sex with the man I was handcuffed to, while the others watched. When he ejaculated in my mouth, I spit the semen and the blood from my bleeding gums on my shirt sleeve. No one noticed me do this. When they off loaded us at R____ unit, a not so bright Sgt. seen the blood on me and asked what happened. Several eyes popped wide open and stared at me. I said my gums started bleeding. You could have heard a pen drop when the Sgt. looked me in my terrified eyes, looked at the other men, grinned and said, "right." Now I'm in a unit designated a "SAFE PRISON" to comply with the Prison Rape Elimination Act. There are about 80 other transexual women here.

Ways I think the Prison Rape Elimination Act could work better in prisons:

1. Force facilities to recognize the GLBT inmates are the highest risk group of all and must be housed differently than general population.
2. Force facilities and their staff to treat MTF transexual women as WOMEN prisoners, in every way and allow them to continue their HRT and GID treatments. Create a support group for them. House them as women are housed. Do the same for Female to Male transexual men.
3. Make unit wardens responsible and accountable for the enforcement of PREA on their units.
4. Require a reporting system that allows for inmates to report violations of the PREA to an authority outside of the facility monitored by the Justice Department or some other outside agency.
5. Require facilities to allow inmates to refuse housing assignments they feel are dangerous to them.
6. Require facilities to allow inmates to have condoms and cleaning supplies in their cells to stop the spread of STDs and other diseases.
7. REQUIRE facilities to have cameras that record every area inmates will be and maintain the data no less than a year. Make the data available to inmates, their lawyers, and the courts to prosecute any violation of the law by

staff or inmates. Make the data available to be included as part of reports of abuse. Insure there are NO blind areas to camera view on the units and require the staff to monitor the cameras.

8. Require copies of the PREA, the standards and all policies that pertain to PREA to be issued to all inmates on the units.

9. Require unit medical departments to issue copies of all STD tests to the inmates being tested, for the files and to prevent the spread.

10. Allow GLBT inmates to be tested for STDs every three months. Most won't do this, but it should at least be offered.

11. Require facilities to allow "couples" to be housed together if they wish, as long as there are no problems between them and they have the same relative classification, keep a clean disciplinary record, and live together in harmony.

12. Require facilities to identify, transport, and keep GLBT inmates separated from general population.

The above listed suggestions are the opinion of the writer and not all of them are agreed upon by the editors of Black and Pink. Discussion and reflections are encouraged.



Prisons, Politics, and the Census

By: Gary Hunter and Peter Wagner (August 2007)

Prisons have become a growth industry for rural America, with a new prison opening in a small town every fifteen days over the last decade. (1) Now a \$60 billion industry,(2) prisons have developed the economic muscle to bend state priorities to their needs. There are now so many people in prison that legislators who have prisons in their districts are able to short-circuit the democratic process that would otherwise govern the prison industry.

Since the first census in 1790, the Census Bureau has counted prisoners as residents of the town where the prison or jail is located. This might have made sense two hundred years ago, when there were few people in prison and the data was only used to determine the relative population of each state and the size of its congressional delegation. It would not have mattered if an incarcerated person was counted at home in New York City or in prison in rural Attica as long as he was counted in the right state.

The importance of accuracy in counting citizens to determine voting districts has long been recognized as vital to a thriving democracy. In the 1960s, the Supreme Court struck down state legislative district plans that gave some citizens more access to government than others, declaring the "One Person One Vote" rule and the

principle that "legislators represent people, not trees or acres. Legislators are elected by voters, not farms or cities or economic interests." (3) From that point forward, districts were to be based on populations, not counties, history, or economics.

Drawing districts based on population requires accurate data, and states looked to the Census Bureau to provide counts for each town and neighborhood. But the centuries-old flaw in how the Bureau counts prisoners soon undermined the ability of states to draw districts that contained the same number of actual residents.

WHERE PRISONERS ARE COUNTED MATTERS

By the 1980s, the prison population was starting its big upswing from the War on Drugs, and by 1990, three out of every thousand people counted by the census were in prison. Concentrated in new and ever-larger prisons in rural areas, this portion of the population was now big enough to matter.

Many state constitutions define residence for a prisoner as the place he or she resided prior to incarceration.(4) This approach reflects the involuntary and short-term nature of incarceration, and a concern that including the residents of correctional facilities could distort the local democratic process. In New York, for example, the state constitution declares that for "the purpose of voting, no person shall be deemed to have gained or lost residence... while confined in any public prison."(5)

The impact on census data is large because prisoners tend to be demographically different from the average population of the country, and because prisoners tend to be incarcerated in communities far removed from their homes. Although few communities are "average," incarcerated people are far from the average demographic. Ninety-two percent of people incarcerated in federal and state prisons are men.(6) Blacks and Latinos are only a quarter of the U.S. population but are almost 63 percent of the nations incarcerated.(7)

According to an analysis of U.S. Census 2000 data, there are twenty-one counties where at least 21 percent of the reported census population is actually incarcerated people from outside the county.(8) In 173 counties, more than half of the African American population reported in the census is incarcerated.(9)

DISTORTING DEMOCRACY AT THE STATE LEVEL

Every prisoner counted as a resident of the prison district decreases the number of "real" residents required for the prison district. As the number of real residents declines in a district, the weight of a vote in that district increases as compared to the residents elsewhere in the state.

Including disenfranchised nonresident prisoners as population for purposes of redistricting creates prison districts with substantially fewer constituents than elsewhere. The real residents of the prison district have more access to their legislator than other state residents.

Each decade, state legislatures use census data to redraw congressional and state legislative districts. The current practice of crediting prisoners to the prison location results in drawing legislative districts near prisons that have large numbers of nonresidents. One legislative district in New York is 7 percent prisoners;(10) a legislative district in Texas is 12 percent prisoners;(11) and 15 percent of one Montana district is prisoners imported from other parts of the state.(12) The existence of these legislative districts with artificial populations increases the voting strength of the real prison-district residents and dilutes the voting strength of residents in every other district in the state. The urban communities that have large numbers of residents incarcerated outside their districts see their voting strength diluted beyond that of the average district in a state, though it is impossible to calculate this precisely because the necessary census data on origin has never been collected.

DISTORTING DEMOCRACY IN RURAL COUNTIES

The impact on local legislatures, such as county boards, is even more pronounced. Because the district sizes tend to be relatively small, a single person can have a significant impact. The Prison Policy Initiative, of which the second author of this piece is the executive director, has noted a number of districts in which the majority of the population are prisoners from other parts of the state. Such analysis has found that rural residents who live in the same community as a prison but in a different county legislative district frequently see their votes on local issues diluted quite severely.

New York's St. Lawrence County includes 3,120 state prisoners within only two of their fifteen legislative districts. The population of District 2 is more than one-quarter prisoners. Although the legislative districts average 7,492 county residents, District 2, in Ogdensburg, has only 5,639.

St. Lawrence County's inclusion of the prisoners was the subject of local controversy in part because the county had previously excluded the prisoners. The legislature changed course in order to shift the balance of power in the county. In response, about 2,000 citizens signed a petition opposing their legislature's plan to include prisoners in population counts. The petition was thrown out on a technicality, and the legislature went ahead with its districting plan, but many of the incumbents who were responsible for this were defeated in the following county election.

Significant vote dilution from the prisoner miscount is not confined to New York. Dodge County, Wisconsin, has a district that is 59 percent prisoners, and Waupun City within the county has an aldermanic district that is 79 percent prisoners. As a result, the small neighborhoods near the prisons get to dominate county and city affairs far out of proportion to the numbers of actual residents.

With the exception of St. Lawrence County as discussed above, every time the rural public has learned that prison populations were being used to dilute their votes in the county legislature, the actual residents of the county demanded that the districts be drawn without the prison populations.

As three residents of New York's upstate Franklin County - Dan Jenkins, Mark Flack Wells, and Norman Gervais - explained in a 2004 letter to the Census Bureau:

"Franklin County has always excluded state prisoners from the base figures used to draw our legislative districts. To do otherwise would contradict how we view our community and would lead to an absurd result: creating a district near Malone that was 2/3rds disenfranchised prisoners who come from other parts of the state. Such a district would dilute the votes of every Franklin County resident outside of that area and skew the county legislature. We know of no complaints from prisoners as a result, as they no doubt look to the New York City Council for the local issues of interest to them."(13)

DISTORTING POLICY DECISIONS IN FAVOR OF PRISON EXPANSION

The most troubling aspect of miscounting prisoners in this fashion is the potential to change the balance of political power between communities who stand on opposite ends of state crime control policy. Removing electoral clout from urban communities that are the most negatively affected by aggressive incarceration policy, and giving that clout to rural communities, has the potential of launching a cycle of prison growth with no democratic restraints.

Sixty-five percent of the nation's prison population is either African American or Latino. Locating these unwilling residents in small, predominantly white towns fundamentally shifts the balance of political power through the redistricting process. The policy impact of miscounting African American and Latino prisoners is clearest in New York State, where African Americans are sent to prison in New York for drug law violations at

a rate 34.5 times higher than whites. The Latino rate is 25.7 times higher than the rate for whites.(14) As a result, in a state that is 62 percent white,(15) African Americans and Latinos account for 93 percent of prison sentences for drug offenses in New York State. (16)

Despite their proven failure, significant reforms of the draconian Rockefeller drug laws has been stalled for years by a small number of powerful state senators with large prisons in their districts. When urban and minority legislators from New York City proposed reforming the laws, the prison district senators accused their critics of plotting a "jail break."(17) Of the seven rural New York State senators whose districts contain large prisons, four of them sit on the powerful criminal law committee where they have successfully stalled reform of the state's Rockefeller drug laws for years.

Crediting prisoners to the prison districts bears a striking resemblance to the original "Three-Fifths" clause of the United States Constitution, which allowed the South to obtain enhanced representation in Congress by counting disenfranchised slaves as three-fifths a person for purposes of congressional apportionment. When credited to the South, the extra population gave the South parity in Congress and the Electoral College. It assured Thomas Jefferson's victory over John Adams in 1800, facilitated Missouri's admission to the Union as a slave state, and otherwise gave the South "important political leverage in Congress"(18) to create a national stalemate that prevented the creation of a democratic solution to the slavery problem. What might have been resolved peacefully in the 1790s became the Civil War of the 1860s precisely because the South received extra political clout from counting people it did not consider to be residents.

OPPOSITION TO CENSUS REFORM

Not surprisingly, most of the opposition to reform comes from legislators whose districts contain prisons. What is surprising is the lack of pretense these legislators give to providing actual representation to the prisoners in their districts. Indeed, the evidence indicates that representatives of such districts do not merely ignore their incarcerated constituents, but advocate policies inimical to their interests. The leading defenders of the Rockefeller drug laws (that require long mandatory prison sentences) are upstate New York senators Dale Volker and Michael Nozzolio, heads of the State Senate Committees on Codes and Crimes, respectively.(19) The prisons in their districts together account for more than 17 percent of the states prisoners.(20)

Senator Volker has been particularly blunt in rejecting the notion that he represents the interests of the 8,951 prisoners assigned to his district, 77 percent of whom are Black or Latino (4,447 Black, 2,427 Latino).(21) As reported in a 2002 interview: "The inmates at Attica prison in western New York State are represented in Albany by state Sen. Dale Volker, a conservative Republican who says it's a good thing his captive constituents can't vote because if they could, 'They would never vote for me.'"(22)

Some rural politicians oppose changing the census, arguing that doing so would transfer much-needed funds back to urban communities and thus bankrupt their towns. Small-town mayors who have staked their town's future on building new prisons are quick to claim any perceived benefit as the direct result of the decision to build the prison. Such politicians often base their assertion on general espousals by the Census Bureau that encourage people to participate in the Census because the data are used in the distribution of federal and state funds. While technically true that census data influences funding, how prisoners are counted does not play a significant part in funding formulas.

California's *Vacaville Reporter* followed this issue in its story about census reform by interviewing the city manager in Vacaville, where 10 percent of the town's population are prisoners. Not surprisingly, the city manager argued that counting prisoners at their home addresses would cost the prison city significant funds. But the *Vacaville Reporter* dug further and interviewed Ken Camp, the city's finance manager, who explained

that the fiscal impact of counting prisoners at home would be small because only a small portion of the budget relies on per capita funding. "We'd lose some gas-tax funds from the state, but not much else." (23)

Detailed reviews of state, federal, and local funding streams reveal that where prisoners are counted has only an occasional impact on governmental financial distributions and that the impacted funds do not affect urban communities.(24) Although census data does play a role in the distribution of more than \$1.5 trillion each decade in federal funds, the vast majority of these funds are unaffected by where prisoners are counted because most prisoners are incarcerated in the state in which they lived prior to incarceration. Medicaid and the federal highway system account for the majority of the partially population-based funds, but these funds are distributed as block grants to states based on the total population of the state and other factors unrelated to incarceration. The majority of other federal funds are in tailored programs that match the program to the need. The low incomes of prisoners do depress per capita income statistics, but most government programs that are concerned with poverty rely on statistics such as "household income" and "poverty" which are automatically calculated without prisoners.

In contrast, state sales taxes are often affected by the decisions of the Census Bureau. Most states distribute sales taxes with portions going directly to the state's general revenues, portions returning to the point-of-sale localities, and portions going to municipalities or other local governments on the basis of population. Thus, communities that host a prison receive an additional, unearned portion of the state sales tax.(25)

In sum the prisoner miscount has a small impact on funding, but it does not drain urban funds to enrich rural communities. Rather, the impact is predominantly a modest distortion in how funds are distributed within rural communities. Such discussion of how the census impacts funding ultimately serves to distract urban and rural people from the real problem: how relying on the prisoner miscount radically distorts policy and democracy at the state and local levels.

CALLS FOR CHANGE

In spite of the objections of those who benefit, and a stubborn bureaucratic Census Bureau, calls for reform are growing. Key Census Bureau advisors have called for change, including the Census Bureau's African American advisory committee and the prestigious National Research Council of the National Academies.

In 1999, then Census Bureau director Kenneth Prewitt opposed an eleventh-hour attempt to change how prisoners were counted in the census.(26) But better conceived proposals presented during the 2010 Census-planning process have since gained his support.(27)

The *New York Times* has written nine editorials highlighting how the prisoner miscount harms democracy, and has been joined by the editorial boards of papers as diverse as the *Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel*, the *Flint Journal* (Michigan) and the rural *Jackson City Patriot* (Jackson County, Michigan).

Fearing that the Census Bureau may not act in time to fix the 2010 Census, some states are preparing interim solutions. Bills are currently pending in New York, Illinois, and Michigan that would create a special state census to gather the home addresses of incarcerated people and correct the federal census prior to redistricting.

Urban and rural legislators around the country are starting to lobby the Census Bureau directly. For example, in a recent letter to the Census Bureau sent by New York State Senator Eric Schneiderman and St. Lawrence County New York Legislator Tedra Cobb, the senators asked the Census Bureau to address its method of counting prisoners. The senators suggested alternative methods, like counting prisoners as residents of addresses outside of the facility. The senators also requested publication of the subsequently gathered redistricting data for prisoner populations, which would provide more detailed counts to assist the state and its counties in properly accounting for prison populations prior to redistricting.

The importance of where the Census Bureau counts prisoners was discovered too late to change the 2000 Census. Given the rapid approach of the 2010 Census, it is possible that a complete change in how the census counts prisoners may need to wait until 2020. But justice may not be so long off, as the *New York Times* editorial board predicted, "Voters who come to understand how this system cheats them are unlikely to keep rewarding the politicians who support it."(28)

UPDATE from Jason Lydon

Unfortunately the U.S. Census will not count prisoners in the right place for 2010. There are state campaigns ongoing to attempt to pass legislation that would require recounting before actually redistricting. If you are curious about what is going on with your state and how you can get involved as a prisoner or advocate for people in prison you can send a letter to -

Prison Policy Initiative

Prisoner of the Census Project

PO Box 127

Northampton MA 01061

About Stonewall

Edited From Wikipedia.org

The **Stonewall riots** were a series of spontaneous demonstrations against a police raid that took place in the early morning hours of June 28, 1969, at the Stonewall Inn, in the Greenwich Village neighborhood of New York City. They are frequently cited as the first instance in American history when people in the queer community fought back against government-sponsored persecution (though this is not accurate, the Compton cafeteria riots came before this, as did others), and they have become the defining event that marked the start of the gay rights movement in the United States and around the world.

Very few establishments welcomed openly queer people in the 1950s and 1960s. Those that did were often bars, although bar owners and managers were rarely queer. The Stonewall Inn was known to be popular with the poorest and most marginalized people in the queer community: drag queens, queers of color, representatives of a newly self-aware transgender community, effeminate young men, hustlers, and homeless youth. Police raids on gay bars were routine in the 1960s, but officers were quickly overpowered (by high heels and broken glass bottles) at the Stonewall Inn, and attracted a crowd that rioted. Tensions between New York City police and queer residents of Greenwich Village erupted into more protests the next evening, and again several nights later. Within weeks, Village residents quickly organized into activist groups to concentrate efforts on establishing places for gays and lesbians to be open about their sexual orientation without fear of being arrested.

After the Stonewall riots, gays and lesbians in New York City faced gender, class, and generational obstacles to becoming a cohesive community. Within six months, two gay activist organizations were formed in New York, concentrating on confrontational tactics, and three newspapers were established to promote rights for gays and lesbians. Within a few years, gay rights organizations were founded across the U.S. and the world.

A Call to Action

By: Kerry D. Pinard

There are those in our communities that know nothing of STONEWALL. I find this to be a sad and sorry state of affairs. Our community is where it is today because of those souls at Stonewall who in 1969 lit the fuse of the bomb that launched the Queer Revolution, a blast that is still heard around the world. We as a community must never forget this vital part of queer history; it is our duty to educate future generations of queer folk.

Stonewall should be our community's call to action, simply because the war it started is not over. We have many battles to wage before we can lay down our arms and claim final victory. We must not become complacent or be lulled into a false sense of security by half measures granted us by some legislative bodies. The Revolution started in 1969 and we still don't enjoy the same rights and liberties that our straight brothers and sisters do.

Our communities today have become fragmented, when in reality we should be of one voice. We have become exclusive rather than inclusive. Some of us for selfish reasons have strayed from our long march to freedom and liberty. But we can celebrate our uniqueness and differences, while working together for everyone's liberation. We are not free, until all are free.

Knights and Dames of Stonewall, we must be forever vigilant. We must stand tall and proud and be of one voice. It is time to be heard, so my brothers and sisters I implore you...Cry Stonewall!

We are Queer and we shall be of one voice. We are brothers and sisters...Cry Stonewall!

Reach out a hand to a brother and sister. Give them support and comfort... Cry Stonewall!

You are the Revolution, you are creating the change... Cry Stonewall

Show your love and kindness in all that you do... Cry Stonewall!

Know that there are brothers and sisters who need you... Cry Stonewall!

To the world at large, from my prison cell, I cry... Stonewall!

Until all are free



In World News...

From: The Rainbow World Fund

"A magnitude 7.1 earthquake struck the Caribbean island nation of Haiti on Tuesday, January 12 near the capital city, Port-au-Prince, causing widespread damage. Many buildings have collapsed and hundreds of dead are lying in the streets. Currently there is no official death toll, but thousands have been injured, hundreds of thousands are now homeless, and many remain unaccounted for. Water and power services are out due to the severe damage to Haiti's already fragile infrastructure.

Since 2004, Rainbow World Fund has supported ongoing projects in Haiti focusing on improving nutrition and developing safe drinking water access. We have been able to help improve the lives of thousands of Haitians. Please be part of the LGBT community's emergency response.

You can make a difference! Help grow RWF's initial aid commitment of \$50,000. It is our hope to see this multiplied several times by the generosity of the LGBT and friends community. [continued on next page]

Our disaster relief partner, CARE, is already on the ground providing emergency food, safe water, plastic for shelter, blankets, and basic medicines. 100% of your donation will go to these life saving services. Every donation helps no matter how small.

□Donate by check at: Rainbow World Fund, 4111 - 18th Street, Suite 5, San Francisco, CA 94114.”

Who I am

Who am I?
I am a man,
I am a woman,
I am a brother,
I am a sister,
I am a father,
I am a mother.
I am a man who
Is a transgender,
A woman trapped in a
Man's body,
But most of all
I am a human being.
That's who I am!

-Paul Washburn, *Texas*



Tragic Tenure: part I-

I signed a life contract with the system
What a fucked up contradiction
Causes and consequences
Pain infliction
Brought on by criminal conviction
Gangsta' affiliation
Your ways emulate an addiction
In a split decision
Your life becomes a tragedy
Shakespearian characters leave you wishin'
You had something in this life to hold onto
As if life were an obtuse obstacle
Razorblades representin' its shape
Capitalism carves its cut
Incision
Resonating on your decision
City sparks and skyscraper parks
When the shadows of men turn dark
We wake up to realize that our heart and our soul
Is nothing more than a mask
Nothing less than a hole
To be fucked
To be sold

-Brennan MacLean

Send us your thoughts, articles, poems, ideas, feedback!

Black and Pink
c/o Community Church of Boston
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